



LITTLE KNOWN
LINCOLN EPISODES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant

m 3,458
(2)

mg 20314

Copyright, 1934
The Lincoln National Life
Insurance Company
Fort Wayne,
Indiana

Little Known Lincoln Episodes

The little known Lincoln episodes in this book were written and compiled by Dr. Louis A. Warren, noted Lincoln scholar and Director of The Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The material from which the episodes were written was secured from the library of the Foundation, which houses the largest privately owned Lincoln collection in the world.

The following letter from the eminent Lincoln author, Ida M. Tarbell, comments on the worth and work of the Foundation.



Dear Dr. Warren:

I have followed the research and publications of the Foundation from the beginning. I naturally felt sure that backed by a generous and understanding organization like The Lincoln National Life, you would build up a useful bureau.

My visit to your library at the time of the dedication of the Manship statue convinced me that you were getting together one of the most useful collections of source material which we have. It is a fine work that the Foundation has been doing.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ida M. Tarbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ida" and last name "Tarbell" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. Louis A. Warren
Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

INTRODUCTION

FORTY-SEVEN words were used by Abraham Lincoln to tell his life story, prepared for the Dictionary of Congress in 1858. Now, over four thousand books and pamphlets have been written about him, and there is a steadily increasing flow of Lincoln literature each year. Yet there are many little-known Lincoln episodes still unpublished.

After receiving the nomination for the presidency, Lincoln wrote these words to a friend: "Holding myself the humblest of all whose names were before the Convention, I feel in especial need of the assistance of all." However, Coolidge said, "Lincoln is the richest legacy of the greatest century"; Wilson wrote that "Lincoln was the supreme American of our history"; and Taft remarked that the "influence of his Christ-like character has spread to the four quarters of the globe."

English appraisals of Abraham Lincoln are even more flattering than the testimonials of his own countrymen: "One of the six greatest figures in history," says H. G. Wells; "The most outstanding character since the Christian era," according to Drinkwater; "One of the five great lawyers of all time" in the opinion of Lord North; and Lloyd George writes, "I doubt whether any statesman who ever lived sank so deeply into the hearts of the people of many lands as Abraham Lincoln did."

THE EPISODES



Arranged in Chronological Order

The Lincoln family migrated to Indiana in 1816

The First Indiana Orphanage

ORPHANED by the death of their mother two years after the removal to the Indiana wilderness, Abraham Lincoln and his sister, Sarah, were joined the following year by three other orphans, the children of their new stepmother. One more unfortunate youth found his way into the Lincoln cabin also, making three groups of orphans under one roof. The home of Thomas Lincoln might thus seem to be rightly called the first Indiana orphanage.

This composite group of children contributed much to the making of Abraham Lincoln. After hearing a sermon preached at the Pigeon Church, Abraham would come home, seat the orphans on a fallen tree trunk, and deliver the parson's discourse, sometimes even improving on the original sermon with all the mannerisms and gestures included. When Ratcliff Boone or other politicians would speak in the community, the orphans again would be corralled, and



Abraham, the embryo statesman, mounted on a stump, would discuss the political issues of the day.

Those early rehearsals did much to develop Lincoln into an extraordinary orator even in his earlier years. A pioneer settler of Illinois offers this appraisal of his talent: "I was then fresh from Kentucky and had heard many of her great orators. It seemed to me then as it seems to me now, that I never heard a more effective speaker."

In 1832 Abraham Lincoln announced as a candidate for the Legislature of Illinois

A Stolen Horse Throws a Candidate

TWO years after Abraham Lincoln reached the Illinois county, he became a candidate for the Legislature, although he was but twenty-three years of age. His published political platform reveals he was mentally alert, as well as vocally active, while living in the Indiana wilderness.

Just a few days after his candidacy was announced, the Black Hawk War broke out. Lincoln enlisted and was elected Captain of his company. The war was soon over, however, and, on July 16, 1832, he was mustered out of service at Whitewater, Michigan Territory, now Wisconsin. Lincoln had been a member of a mounted company and proposed to get up early the next morning and ride back to New Salem as rapidly as the horse could carry him. But, alas, someone was up before him and stole his horse.

There were now just twenty days intervening before the election, and he was three hundred miles from the voting precinct. He



must have known that the loss of the horse virtually meant the loss of the election. He had lived in New Salem but eight months and was practically unknown outside the community. Obligated to walk most of the way home, he could not have arrived in New Salem more than one week before the election. Of the ten candidates in the field, four of whom were to be elected, he ran a good seventh. All but three of the two hundred and eighty-one votes recorded in the New Salem precinct were cast for him. His only political failure at the hands of the people he must have blamed on the stolen horse.

For four consecutive terms, 1834 to 1840 inclusive, Lincoln was elected a
State Representative

The Long Nine

ALTHOUGH Abraham Lincoln suffered defeat in his first political race, his candidacy the following term was successful. Again in 1836, he was elected to the Legislature of Illinois, along with eight other men from Sangamon County. Each of them was six feet tall or over, and they were soon recognized as the "Long Nine." Their escapades have become proverbial. On one occasion, when it appeared that legislation might go against their wishes, Lincoln, noting that one member less would prevent a quorum from being present, quickly jumped out of a window. Remembering that incident, someone suggested that the State House be built a story higher to prevent such escapes, and, strange to say, another story was added to the structure years later.

A reference had been made at one session to the figure "nine" being associated with old women. Lincoln said:



"A few years since the delegation from this county was dubbed the 'Long Nine,' and, by the way of further distinction I had been called the longest of the nine. Now if any woman, old or young, ever thought there was any peculiar charm in this distinguished specimen of number nine, I have, as yet, been so unfortunate as not to have discovered it."

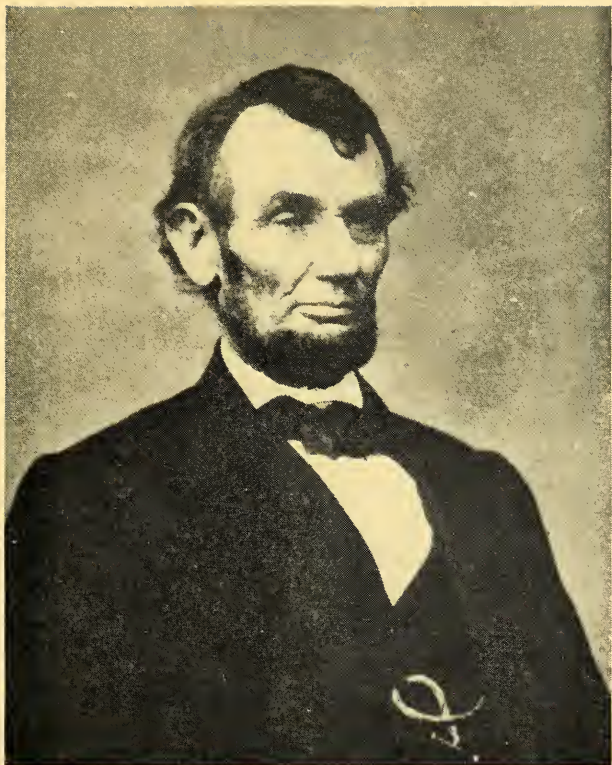
The wedding of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd took place on
November 4, 1842

The Reluctant Lover

IT was not long after Abraham moved to Springfield, Illinois, in 1837, that he learned someone did discover "the peculiar charm" of a certain member of the "Long Nine."

By January 1, 1841, the courtship of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd had reached a stage where an announcement of the wedding day was anticipated. It was this New Year's Day, however, which Lincoln referred to later on as "the fatal first of January." There are some fanciful stories which tell of a bride "bedecked in veil and silken gown" left waiting at the altar for a groom who did not appear, but careful students of Lincoln history now discard this and similar gossip.

Those who have studied Lincoln's attitude towards women are convinced that he was reluctant to enter into a marriage with one whom he did not feel he could make happy, because he could not furnish her with the financial means to move in the society to which she had been accustomed. The fatal first of January, 1841, was nothing more than Abraham Lincoln's New Year's resolution to tell Mary Todd he did not feel it would be right for him to marry her. The following year, however, this resolution was not renewed,



THE BEST PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"The most satisfactory likeness of him," are the words which Robert Lincoln used in describing the picture of his father shown on this page. The photograph was taken by Brady at Washington, February 9, 1864.

An original print of this photograph was presented to The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, to be used as its insignia, by Robert Todd Lincoln on August 3, 1905.

LITTLE KNOWN LITHOGRAPH



Lincoln and Unknown

The noted engraver, John Sartain, is responsible for this colonial figure appearing in disguise as Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln and Henry Clay

Lincoln's political hero was Henry Clay and here his own head occupies the place where Clay's originally reposed.



No full length portrait of Lincoln seemed to be available at any time during his campaigns or administration, and these unusual lithographs are the results of artists' efforts to satisfy the public demand. The lithographer-artist in the above

IS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

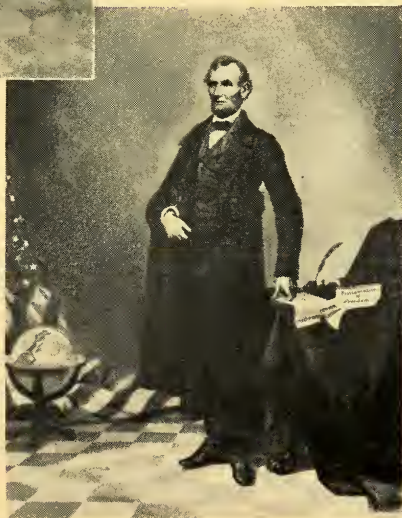


Lincoln and Unknown

Some statesman of earlier days had his entire wearing apparel made over to harmonize with a later period and support the head of Lincoln.

Lincoln and John C. Calhoun

John C. Calhoun in this instance lost his head and the famous Brady portrait of Lincoln now adorns the shoulders.



cases worked from old steel engravings of other famous men, copied the picture on a lithograph stone and then drew in the head of Lincoln. The stone was then etched with acid and a lithograph made from it.



"ABRAHAM LINCOLN—THE HOOSIER YOUTH"

By Paul Manship

Heroic bronze statue of Lincoln at the age of 21. Located on the entrance plaza of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company's building in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



and a reconciliation was brought about between the lovers. Lincoln wrote to a friend, "I cannot but reproach myself for even wishing to be happy while she is otherwise." Then, possibly still reluctantly, he married her.

A series of seven debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas were arranged in 1858

The Big and Little Giants

TRADITION has it that Mary Todd was courted by both Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. Whether or not this is true, it is quite certain that no two statesmen who have ever been brought together in public life were so different in personal appearance as these two men. One was exceedingly tall, the other extremely short; one was lean, the other was fat; one wore ill-fitting clothes, the other was well groomed.

There were other contrasts that were noticeable. One had a high-pitched voice, the other a low-toned voice; one was a droll, rural citizen, the other of a brisk urban type; one was free from the bad habits of the day, while the other openly indulged in them; one was little known outside his own state, the other was widely known throughout the nation.

Politically the contrasts were just as marked, and presented an interesting paradox. One was born in the south, the other in the north; the southerner was for freeing the slaves, the northerner was for holding them; the southerner became the leader of the north, the northerner became the champion of the south.

Furthermore, in the senatorial contest of 1858, Abraham Lincoln polled a much larger popular vote than his opponent, Stephen A.



Douglas, but, owing to an improper division of districts, the candidate receiving the fewer popular votes was favored by a larger number of the electoral body. With Lincoln's defeat of Douglas for the presidency in 1860, the differences in opinion at least were harmonized, and the big and little giants united in an effort to save the Union.

Lincoln started to grow a beard immediately after his election to the Presidency in 1860

Puttin' on (H) airs

IN August, 1860, an eleven year old girl wrote to Abraham Lincoln: "I have four brothers and part of them will vote for you anyway and if you will let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest to vote for you; you would look a great deal better for your face is so sad and thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President."

Lincoln won the election, however, without resorting to the campaign suggestion of his correspondent, Grace Bedell; but immediately after the election he did give more attention to his personal appearance and began to wear a beard. This was naturally the subject of much political-lamprooning and one wit in a newspaper dated December 27, 1860, submitted this item, "They say Old Abe is raising a pair of whiskers. Some individual of the cockney persuasion remarked that he was 'a puttin' on (h) airs'."

The sequel to Grace Bedell's letter is found in the inaugural trip to Washington. When the President's train stopped at Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York, Mr. Lincoln stepped to the platform and inquired of the large crowd which had assembled if



little Grace Bedell, with whom he had had some correspondence, was present. She was there and came forward, whereupon Mr. Lincoln stepped down from the car, shook her hand, kissed her, and remarked, "You see, Grace, I let my whiskers grow for you."

The inaugural train left Springfield, Illinois, for Washington on February 11, 1861

First Attempt to Assassinate a President

A FEW days after the presidential train passed through Westfield, an occasion occurred which stands out in vivid contrast to the President's recognition of the little child.

Allan Pinkerton, the dean of American detectives, kept a journal in which we may find his belief in a well-organized plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln on his way to the inaugural ceremonies. Pinkerton writes, "The leaders finally fully determined that the assassination should take place at the Calvert Street Depot, Baltimore . . . When Mr. Lincoln should attempt to pass through the narrow passage leading to the street some roughs were to raise a row on the outside, and all the police were to rush away to quell the disturbance. At this moment, the police being withdrawn, Mr. Lincoln would find himself in a dense, excited, and hostile crowd, hustled and jammed, and then the fatal blow was to be struck."

Pinkerton advised Lincoln of the plot when he reached Philadelphia and urged him to depart for Washington that night. This Lincoln refused to do. The next day, Washington's birthday, February 22, 1861, he spoke at Independence Hall. Here in the cradle of the republic and on the anniversary of the first president's birth, Lincoln said that he would "rather be assassinated on the spot than surrender those principles" for which the fathers of the nation died.



That night the President was escorted to Washington under the direction of Pinkerton, and the first attempt to assassinate a president of the United States of America had been foiled.

On May 10, 1861, Lincoln proclaimed martial law and the Civil War was on

The Tragedies of the White House

THE preservation of his own life gave Lincoln little concern after his arrival in Washington, although he was in constant danger. The White House could very appropriately have been draped in mourning during the entire period of Lincoln's administration. There was a long line of sad-faced mothers and widows continually seeking to interview the President, and the horrors of the war settled down over the presidential mansion like a great shroud.

Lincoln's own family circle was stricken. His third child, Willie, then eleven years of age, was taken ill and died. With all the burdens of the nation resting on his shoulders, this new sorrow came doubly hard, but a still greater affliction was to follow.

The death of Willie completely upset the mental poise of Abraham Lincoln's wife, the mother of his children. One recent writer qualified to speak with authority on the subject claims that the death of Willie was indirectly responsible for the mental collapse of Mrs. Lincoln, and that for the rest of his life Abraham Lincoln lived with a wife who was on the verge of insanity.

Elizabeth Keckley, who was an employee in the White House in 1862, recalls that during one of Mrs. Lincoln's hysterical outbursts, the President put his arm about her and, while they were standing by a window from which a hospital for the insane was visible, re-



marked, "Mary, if you do not control yourself we will have to put you over there."

Lincoln first announced his intention to free the slaves on September 22, 1862

Lincoln's Preferred Plan of Emancipation

IT was during the days that Willie Lincoln was ill that the question of issuing the Emancipation Proclamation was being given serious consideration. Lincoln had been trying to convince a stubborn cabinet that saving the Union by armed force would be a costly affair and incur a fearful loss of life. He proposed that the nation purchase the slaves and set them free. This plan, worked out in detail, was called "Compensated Emancipation." One-half of Lincoln's annual message to Congress in 1862 was given over to advocating the wisdom of this plan. But Congress was equally stubborn and refused to listen to one of the most sensible, as well as one of the most eloquent, appeals of Lincoln's career.

Even after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Lincoln continued to advocate compensating the south for her slave property. The last appeal made to the Cabinet to support his plan of compensation was at the very close of the war, after his return from the Peace Conference with the southern envoys. The resolution of the President proposed to pay three million dollars to the southern states for the slaves liberated by the proclamation. Then followed in detail the plans for putting this program on foot. On the back of the document, written by Lincoln, is this endorsement: "February 5, 1865. Today these papers, which explain themselves, were drawn up and submitted to the Cabinet and unanimously disapproved by them. A. Lincoln."



The dedication of the battlefield at Gettysburg took place on November 19, 1863

Five Gettysburg Addresses

A BRAHAM LINCOLN, the liberator of a race held in compulsory unrewarded labor, did as much for American oratory; he freed it from the elaborate and pompous style then in popular favor. The Gettysburg address stands pre-eminently as a composition demonstrating the eloquence of simplicity.

In his Gettysburg address, Lincoln stated that the words he said there would not long be remembered. They will probably never be forgotten. The real problem has been to learn just exactly what Lincoln did say there. Instead of there being but one Gettysburg address, there are five written in Lincoln's own hand.

It is true they are all very much alike, and the sentiment expressed in each of them is identical; yet, realizing that no address of any man has been so often cast in metal and engraved in stone, it does seem to be of paramount importance that every word should be reproduced exactly as he spoke it on that immortal occasion.

At least two copies of the address were written by Lincoln before its delivery on November 19, 1863. Shortly after the dedication at Gettysburg, Edward Everett requested a transcript for the Sanitary Fair at New York City. Two others were made for George Bancroft, the historian; the first one he retained, and the last one was presented to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Fair at Baltimore. This last draft published in facsimile in *Autographed Leaves of our Country's Authors*, has become the authorized version of the address. It was written by Lincoln after he had compared the stenographic reports of what he said with his own copy used at Gettysburg. It contains two hundred and seventy words.



